THOSE ECCENTRIC CUBISTS AND THEIR FANTAST

It Requires an Odd Sort of Taste to Appreciate Their Crazy Drawing, But One Parisian Faction Hails Them as Geniuses Regardless of What Another Set Calls Them

DARIS usually takes its art seriously. The Parisians are proud of their artists and enjoy having Paris called the City of Painters. At the same time they are not slow to see a joke and the moment the efforts of the city's struggling artists descend from the sublime to the ridiculous they are the first to laugh at it. They take no stock in the statement that the man who lets off his cachinnations last has unothing on the man who beat him to if. They have a good, hearty laugh every time something strikes them as vidiculous and if it turns out to be a serious matter later they graciously admit their defeat and revel in the fact that they had one good laugh out of it, anymay.

That is Paria's attitude on the subject of Cubism and the Cubists. The gay old capital usually goes to the art exhibitious in its most reverent and respectful mood, but this year it took one look at the Cubist canvases, lost its composure completely and frankly laughed. When it saw a combination of cubes and triangles which looked more like the layout of a the triangles which looked more like the layout of a theorem in geometry than anything else it grinned and when it noticed that this combination was labeled, "A summer Day Near Marseilles," it broke into a roar and left the exhibition room holding on to its sides. Immediately the Autonn salon became popular. It was the biggest joke of the year.

Somebody soon wanted to know what it was all about, and Jean Metzinger, who is the ringleader of the Cubists, stepped forward and answered the question. The Parisians were surprised to find that anyone knew who the Cubists were. They thought the paintings must be a practical joke that someone had perpetrated. They couldn't imagine anyone doing such a thing seriously and in cold blood. So when M. Metzinger began to expound the new doctrine of art, they listened to him respectfully. They were too surprised to do otherwise.

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The Cubist-in-chief spoke quite clearly and handled his words so deftly that people began to think that ne must mean something, although they didn't quite grasp it. "We have torn up by the roots," he said, "the prejudice which enjoined the painter to stand motionless at a given distance from the object painted and to trace upon the canvas merely a photograph copied from that taken by his retina, although more or less modified by personal feeling. We have taken the liberty to move around the object painted in order to give thereof concrete representation composed of sev-

La Femme a l'Aigrette by Van Dongen.

eral successive aspects under the control of the intli-

T HE PARISIANS were somewhat perturbed when they heard that the Cubists were going to move they heard that the Cubists were going to move around the object they were painting and show how it looked from all sides. Even gay old boulevardiers shuddered to think what might happen if they ever attempted to paint a nude figure. But they were thankful to find that the intelligence was to vouchsafe some control. They hadn't seen any exhibition of this control at the salon, but the promise of it gave them some relief. They hardly dared to think what Cubism would be like if it were allowed to run riot.

The Cubists' pictures consist of representations of solid cubes or polyhedra generally painted gray and niled one on top of another as if they were children's blocks with the occasional introduction of spheres or portions of spheres as a variation. At first sight they give very much the impression of a patchwork quilt. But on closer examination, if one has the patience for it, shadowy figures seem to emerge from behind the piled cubes. They glided slowly out into sight, and if one happens to know the title of the painting, and is willing to look long enough, he can see these figures

Cabism really is not a new thing, but is is the first time that it has been forced upon the public notice as a serious thing. The Cubists have exhibited before in the Solon des Independants. In fact they have stoed out in those exhibitions as being far above the ordinary. The requirements for gaining admission to the Independants consist in being bad enough to be refused everywhere else. For the past few seasons the Cubists have occupied conspicuous places on the walls of this exhibition, but they just harely got in. They were almost too good. But nobody is ever surprised at anything at the Independants. So it was only when the Cubists got into the Salon d'Automne that they began to attract attention.

T HOSE who were in Paris last year will remember one painting in the Salon des Independants which did create something of a commotion. And this shows just what the quality of that salon is. The vast majori - of the paintings there consist merely of patches of color without any meaning whatsoever. They usually have some name attached to them, but no one can ever see why they should have that particular name any more than another. People go to see this exhibi-



"Woman With the Fan," by Pablo Picasso, One of the Most Eccentric Cubists.

take on the form which their artist wished tucm to. It

rather gives one the creeps though to watch these cubes squirm into the required shapes.

Judging by the accounts which several persons have given of their feelings upon leaving the salon, one would think that these so-called works of art one would think that these so-called works of art might in time have a disastrous effect upon the minds of those who study them seriously. One of them related that after contemplating the products of the Cubists for twenty minutes, which is held to be a record up to the present, he went out into the air to find the streets swimming in magenta and the bouses collapsing all about him, while the memory of the canvases within still bombarded his senses until the world rocked with borrid laughter.

The majority of those who attended the verins-sage of the Autumn salon did not burden their brains sage of the Autumn saion and not outlet their orans with studying these pictures to the extent of being temporarily robbed of their reason. They escaped as soon as possible and put aside the nightmare of the galleries. They were unutterably happy to be free, and found new zest in the moderation of blue sky and found new zest in the moderation of bide sky above them, the good sense of solid ground under their feet and the reasonable anatomy of the people who were passing by. They seemed saintly because they were so human. Reality was refreshing after the cubes and rhomboids of the Cubists.

tion just as they would to see a display of fireworks, although their esthetic taste is not nearly so much satisfied by the odd color schemes as it is by pin-wheels and skyrockets.

Last year one of the canvases was much admired.

it was so much better than the rest. It seemed to have some slight connection with what it was supposed to represent. The card under it announced that it was the scene of "A Sunrise on the Adriatic." And in fact, those who saw it could make out patches of blue tact, those who saw it could make out patches of blue and green in the lower half which might without too great difficulty he called the Adriatic. The upper half was blues and grays and vellows, and one knew that was a blue sky with clouds lighted by the sun floating recklessly about in it. In the center was a flaming yellow orb just showing its head above the splotch of green and blue. Everyone admitted that it did look something like "A Sanrise on the Adriatic."

After the picture had been admired for about a week two students of the Latin quarter made a con-fession and told how the work of art had been painted. It seems that they had a ground floor studio in the Rue de Vaugirard, and knowing the kind of art that was ordinarily exhibited at the Salou des Independents they decided to borrow a neighbor's donkey and have him paint it. The neighbor only used the animal for



averse to leaning him to the students for the after-

They took the donkey into their studio and backed him up to a fresh, clean canvas they had prepaced. They fied a brush to the animal's tail, dipped it in a pot of green paint, and punched him in the ribs. This treatment annoyed the donkey somewhat, and be This treatment annoyed the donkey somewhat, and he began to switch his tail. He made two or three broad swipes across the canvas, and the green paint flow in every direction. The students repeated this performance with the different colors of paint which they had handy, blue, gray and vellow. The donkey had become somewhat accustomed to being poked in the ribs when they came to the yellow, and he only made a small daub in the middle of the canvas. Then the students led him away and looked at his handiwork. They decided immediately that it should be called "A



How a Prizefight Appears to a Cubist.

forthwith.

T IIIS was the sort of an exhibition to which Cubists have been confined in the past, but year they got into the Autumn salon, and that is sear they get into the Autumn salou, and that is step in advance. It means that each of the Cubwloo exhibits has succeeded in meraping up the france. One has to pay that sum to get into. Antumn salou, and in that respect it is stiffer than Independents. And this financial difference is succeed to obtain for them the serious consideration the critics. In other words, they are thirty from the than they have been in the past, and that profe Paris which is not laughing loudly is hading that geniuses.

Recently the controversy has taken a serious than it begins to look as though the Cubists might

Recently the controversy has taken a serious to and it begins to look as though the Cubists might a be such fools as people first thought they were. The are willing to explain the reasons for their new and some of their reasons are unite convincing. Mo over, they are daily gaining adherents. The leader the movement is Jean Metzinger. De la Fresnaye, Gleizes are its most rabid exponents, while Dune de Segonzae sometimes succeeds in painting a put that the laiety can see some meaning in. Pablo asso has a painting in this season's salon cut "The Woman With the Fan," which on close examing in some so bad as it asems as first glance. Aug Herbe with his "Study of a Woman" is another the most commendable exponents of Cubism.

The Cubists should not be dismissed without a

The Cabists should not be dismissed without Who knows but what there

trial. Who knows but what there may be some this in their art which will influence the old a established method of painting for good the same the much ridiculed impressionist movement didfeourse the Cubists are succeed, but that is nothing their favor. A feel or a lunatic can be sincere. The work should be judged as it stands, and an examition of it from that point of view would seen to dicate that it is not all "bosh."

Cubism means only that the artist divides up patterns into as many angles as he may, and dwarpon the triangles that are found in anything from face to the lapel of a cont. And this is not feallness idea at all. The Egyptians used angularity all its forms. The cathedrals of France and the sailes of the east are full of the dignity of rigid to position. A Persian rug contrives to be beautierowided as it is with zigzagging angles. In the beginnings of all art appear to have their fed dations in straight lines. Perhaps the Cubists are so erany as we think. erazy as we think

WHAT SIMPLIFIED SPELLING WOULD ACCOMPLISH



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BY I. K. FUNK.

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